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## Sexual-Assault Training Software Successful

By Brian Foley, Staff Writer

PLEASANTON, CA – ValleyCare Health System received additional money from Alameda County for its successful sexual-assault victims program, designed to introduce computer software to better train its personnel.

The assault center, or SART, received more than \$107,000 this fiscal year, with \$20,000 of it going toward the purchase of software specifically for training.

The SART program, which began in 2001, is located at ValleyCare Hospital in Pleasanton and Highland Hospital in Oakland. Administrators hope to introduce the program soon at Washington Hospital in Fremont.

“If it’s available in the community in which the assault took place, then they will go to the local hospital where they might feel more comfortable,” said Cindy Noonan, Chief Operating Officer for ValleyCare Health System. “If the services are there, then there is more of a chance of them coming forward.”

Noonan believes that as services become more readily available at the local level, reported cases usually go up. She added that personnel are always in need of special training for treating sexual assault victims because of the unique trauma that comes with being a victim.

“It requires a lot of training on the part of the examiner,” Noonan said. “It’s been very successful and it’s an ongoing program I hope we can continue forever.”

Noonan said that while the SART program centers on treatment, the Tri-Valley Haven in Livermore centers on awareness, another important entity of reducing sexual assault incidents.

“We’re not seeing an increase in sexual assault in the Tri-Valley,” Noonan said. “It’s remained steady; maybe even a decrease over the past year here.”

The Tri-Valley Haven also offers a domestic violence shelter, a crisis hot line and counseling. For more information, visit its Web site at <http://www.trivalleyhaven.org>.

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